

PLANETSIDE

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PLANETSIDE

ACT I

SCENE I

Falling from the shuttle

[Ryder is inside the shuttle, facing Liam. Fishing is piloting the shuttle.]

FISHER:

Turning to vector one-three-five.

ALEC RYDER (COMM):

Copy that. We're on point.

[Ryder and Liam look at space through the windows where a space cloud can be seen.]

LIAM:

Wow, will you look at that?

RYDER:

Whatever it is, it stopped the Hyperion in its tracks.

SAM:

It appears to be an unstable mass of dark energy.

LIAM:

If you say so.

ALEC RYDER (COMM):

Steer clear of it.

FISHER:

Getting some chop here.

SAM:

Gravity anomalies detected.

Kirkland:
I'll see if I can even it out.

GREER:
My stomach would appreciate that.

KIRKLAND:
We're clear. Accelerating to cruising speed.

LIAM:
Ryder, we didn't have a chance to meet back in the Milky Way. Name's Liam Costa, security and response specialist.

RYDER:
Good to meet you, Liam.

LIAM:
Hard to believe we're finally doing this.

RYDER:
Sure beats reading the brochures.

FISHER:
Beginning our declaration. Planet's dead ahead.

[The shuttles enter the planet's atmosphere.]

KIRKLAND:
Hang on, initiating atmospheric entry.

LIAM:
Here we go...

FISHER:
Flight guidance is scrambled!

KIRKLAND:
It'll pass!

FISHER:
The controls are fighting me.

SAM:

Adjust approach vector three degrees to starboard.

[The planet's landscape appears through the windows.]

KIRKLAND:

We're through.

LIAM:

Holy...

[The landscape is largely mountainous.]

CORA (COMM):

Shuttle Two, are you seeing this?

RYDER:

Copy that. Doesn't look like a golden world from here.

KIRKLAND:

Ionisation levels are rising...

ALEC RYDER (COMM):

Stay on course to the landing zone.

SAM:

Oxygen levels are below minimum human requirements.

FISHER:

Is this the right planet? I thought we had all this worked out...

ALEC RYDER (COMM):

Keep it tight, Shuttle Two.

[The shuttles pass by rocks floating in the sky.]

LIAM:

Uh, the mountains are floating...

FISHER:
Look! Port side!

[Alien structures can be seen on the planet's surface.]

CORA (COMM):
That *has* to be advanced engineering.

ALEC RYDER (COMM):
Hyperion, this is the Pathfinder. We've got evidence of an alien civilisation.

RYDER:
Has anyone seen us?

LIAM:
What if they're not friendly?

ALEC RYDER (COMM):
We stick to contact protocol: no use of deadly force unless hostile intent is clear.

FISHER
Shit! Ionisation just spiked-

[The sky outside becomes darker and the shuttle starts shaking, making Ryder and Liam lose their balance. Fisher and Kirkland send SOS messages.]

LIAM:
Whoa!

[The wall of the shuttle is struck by lightning, and Liam falls out of the shuttle, barely clinging on. Ryder tries to catch him.]

RYDER:
Liam! Hang on!

LIAM:
Ryder!

[Liam screams and loses his grip. Ryder loses his balance and falls from the shuttle. He screams on his way down.]

SAM:
Acceleration increasing.

RYDER:
No kidding!

SAM:
Your jump-jet is malfunctioning.

RYDER:
Get it working!

SAM:
Approaching terminal velocity.

RYDER:
SAM!

[Ryder crashes into a rock and falls down a mountain, breathing hard. As he hits the ground, his helmet breaks.]

RYDER:
Ah, shit...

[Ryder uses his omni-tool to fix his broken helmet. He breathes hard but seems relieved once it's fixed. Thunder can be heard, which reminds Ryder of where he is. He gets up. Mountains do appear to be floating. Ryder attempts to use his omni-tool to contact someone from the Initiative.]

RYDER:
This is Ryder. Come in. Hyperion? SAM? Anyone there?

[It doesn't appear to be working. Liam joins him, breathing hard from running.]

LIAM:
Save your breath, Ryder. SAM's offline. Comm link's trashed. I'm surprised we aren't too.

*RYDER - dialogues options:
CASUAL -Did that really happen?
PROFESSIONAL -Any survivors?*

RYDER:

Did the others make it?

LIAM:

I don't know. It was all a blur. Shuttle split in two... this is like some nightmare.

RYDER:

Yeah, No way this is home.

[They stand together, looking at the landscape.]

LIAM:

Looks like we gotta find some high ground. See if anyone else is alive. Come on.

[Liam leaves. Ryder joins him, weapon out.]

LIAM:

Ryder, how's your survival training?

RYDER:

I've seen my share of troubles. Nothing crazy, but...

LIAM:

Well, crazy just found us. Those rocks out there are *floating*.

RYDER:

Terra incognita.

LIAM:

Some of these plants look like tentacles. Is the water here even water?

[Ryder scans one of the plants.]

RYDER:

Well, without SAM, it's hard to say exactly what it is. It's sort of a plant, and maybe dead, but maybe not.

LIAM:

Those structures we saw on the way in—who could survive in a place like this?

RYDER:

Not sure we want to find out.

LIAM:

Storms here don't seem natural.

[Ryder scans some debris on the ground.]

RYDER:

Damaged in the crash. No good to us now.

[Ryder finds and examines the QEC (Quantum Entanglement Communicator) Communications Relay.]

LIAM:

There's our comm device.

RYDER:

No fixing this. Must've broken on impact.

LIAM:

Explains why we lost our SAM connection.

[Ryder and Liam walk forward.]

RYDER:

Oh, and safety tip: don't breathe the air. Found that out the hard way.

LIAM:

Got it.

[They pass by various debris from the shuttle's crush. Thunder can be heard everywhere they go and lightning strikes the ground.]

LIAM:

You think that energy cloud we saw could cause all this?

RYDER:

SAM said it's dark energy, but that's in space.

LIAM:
Yeah. Hell of a cloud.

RYDER:
A cloud that makes boulders float.

[Liam and Ryder come across a field where lightning keeps striking the ground without stopping once.]

LIAM:
Uh, what the hell is this?

RYDER:
Come on—we gotta get through it!

LIAM:
This is crazy!

RYDER:
Welcome to Habitat 7!

[Liam and Ryder sprint.]

RYDER:
Keep moving!

LIAM:
Ahh!

RYDER:
Damn it!

LIAM:
Shit, that hurt!

RYDER:
Looks safer under there!

LIAM:
Is this for real?

[Liam and Ryder reach the other side, which is protected from the thunder by a natural overhang.]

LIAM:
What the hell's going on with this place?

RYDER:
Planet's trying to murder us.

[Liam and Ryder now walk in an open field.]

RYDER:
Look—something flying around in the sky...

[They both look at the sky and see large creatures flying.]

LIAM:
Oh, wow.

RYDER:
“Here by dragons.” Cora will love it.

[They keep walking and see a cliff a few feet away from them.]

LIAM:
There! We get up that cliff, we can find high ground. Come on!

RYDER:
Not sure we want to be the tallest thing around here.

LIAM:
I think I can see a path up. We'll use the jump-jets if we have to.

RYDER:
Into the breach...

LIAM:
Think I'd rather fall than get hit by lightning.

RYDER:
Give it a minute—we can probably do both.

[Ryder and Liam use their jump jet to reach a plateau.]

RYDER:
How'd my dad find you?

LIAM:
I was a cop. Then crisis response.

RYDER:
Yeah?

LIAM:
Tell you over a beer sometime.

[The cliff is up ahead, separated from them by a long stretch of empty air.]

RYDER:
This is going to be close!

LIAM:
That's it. We're getting there.

[They use their jump jet to go from ledge to ledge.]

RYDER:
Think I see the top.

[Ryder jumps and stands now on the top of the cliff. Liam is holding on to the edge.]

LIAM:
Mind making some room?

[Ryder gives his hand and Liam uses it to push himself forward and stand.]

LIAM:
Thanks.

[They both look in front of them. There is a large monolith from which a blue cloud seems to originate, expanding in the sky above.]

LIAM:

What... the hell is that?

RYDER - dialogues options:

EMOTIONAL -Trouble.

LOGICAL -A mystery to solve.

RYDER:

Don't know. But it's our job to figure it out.

LIAM:

That sounds like your old man talking.

RYDER:

He was right. Something went wrong here. We have to find out what.

LIAM:

One thing at a time.

SCENE II

First contact

[They see their shuttle down the cliff. It's on fire, but Fisher is there.]

LIAM:

Ryder—It's Fisher.

[Liam is about to join him but Ryder pushes him on the ground, so they remain under cover.]

RYDER:

Wait... look!

[In front of them, two aliens are searching the shuttle's crash site. Their weapons are drawn. Fisher is hiding behind a crate.]

LIAM:

Holy shit. What was first contact protocol again?

RYDER:

No deadly force unless fired upon.

LIAM:

Yeah, said no one in the field ever. How do we handle it?

RYDER - dialogues options:

-Expect the worst.

-Follow protocol.

RYDER:

Take it easy. We only get one shot at “hello” with these guys.

LIAM:

Yeah, and Fisher gets shot in the head if we’re wrong.

[Ryder and Liam approach with weapons holstered.]

RYDER:

Nice and easy—we only go hot if we have to.

LIAM:

Don’t think they’ve spotted us yet.

[Ryder and Liam walk slowly.]

LIAM:

Shit—they see Fisher!

[Ryder and Liam stop.]

LIAM:

Well, what’s the play?

ALIEN:

Niad shurid!

LIAM:

He sees us!

RYDER:

We can't understand you. Give us our man, or this gets ugly!

ALIEN:

Gosad!

LIAM:

What's the other guy doing?

[One of the aliens kicks Fisher repeatedly. He starts screaming from the pain.]

LIAM:

Ryder, they'll kill him!

[Ryder has no choice but to fire. He kills the aliens with Liam, then rushes to see if Fisher is okay. Liam kneels in front of Fisher.]

RYDER:

Okay... It's over.

LIAM:

Fisher, you okay?

FISHER:

So much for making peace with the locals. Thanks for jumping in.

RYDER - dialogues options:

EMOTIONAL -Wasn't much choice.

LOGICAL -I didn't want to fight.

RYDER:

I wish I didn't have to. The first aliens we meet, and we try to kill each other? That wasn't the plan.

LIAM:

Then we need a new one. At least we know what's what. The brochures were light on aliens who want to shoot your head off

[Ryder sighs. Liam gets up.]

FISHER:

We still don't even know what they wanted.

LIAM:

The way they treated you? Blood samples, I'd say. Lots of them.

RYDER - dialogues options:

EMOTIONAL -I hoped for better.

LOGICAL -We're the aliens here.

RYDER:

Who says we'd even understand? Or they'd understand us? It's a new galaxy. I guess it's too much to expect they'll play by Milky Way rules.

LIAM:

They broke the rules in any galaxy.

FISHER:

But why go after us like that?

LIAM:

Only thing I know for sure, their guns hit just as hard as ours.

[Liam and Ryder both have their weapons drawn, alert and looking around in case more aliens are coming. Liam turns to Fisher.]

LIAM:

Where are the others?

FISHER:

Gone. Kirkland and Greer went looking for help.

RYDER:

Come on.

[Ryder attempts to pull Fisher to his feet, without success.]

FISHER:

Ahh... my leg.

RYDER:
Can you move?

FISHER:
I think it's broken. You guys push ahead and look for the others.

RYDER:
You sure?

FISHER:
Yeah. Just find us a ride out of here. And take a few more of them out while you're at it.

[Ryder and Liam look at the bodies of the aliens they killed.]

LIAM:
Whoa. Take a look at these bodies. What are these things?

[Ryder scans one of the alien bodies.]

RYDER:
Well, I don't have SAM here, but I can try to make sense of it. They're DNA-based. And their armor reads as some kind of bone. But the genetics are all over the map.

LIAM:
Huh. I guess life took a different turn here, huh?

[Ryder and Liam leave Fisher.]

LIAM:
I hope the other team's okay.

RYDER:
We'll find them. But we might want to scout around first.

LIAM:
You're the Recon Specialist—point the way.

RYDER:
Right.

SCENE III

Exploring Habitat 7

[Ryder picks up supplies from one of the crates found in the wreckage.]

LIAM:

Looks like you knew how to handle a gun back there.

RYDER:

Spent time with an Alliance peacekeeping force.

[They walk away from the shuttle's crash site.]

ALIEN (VOICE-OVER):

Kal sarhos!

LIAM:

Hear that?

[They see Kirkland surrounded by three aliens of the same new species they'd just encountered.]

LIAM:

Is that Kirkland?

ALIEN:

Lutod nyro!

KIRKLAND:

Please! I surrender!

ALIEN:

Lutod nyro!

KIRKLAND:

I said I surrender!

[The aliens shoot Kirkland. He screams.]

LIAM:
They shot him!

[Liam and Ryder jump out from hiding and begin shooting the aliens.]

RYDER:
Take them out!

LIAM:
Right behind you! They want a fight, we'll give it to them!

[They kill the aliens.]

LIAM:
That's the last of them.

RYDER:
I can't believe we're doing this.

LIAM:
Did Kirkland make it?

[They walk toward Kirkland. Ryder uses his omni-tool to scan Kirkland's body.]

RYDER:
No vital signs. Just shot him in cold blood.

LIAM:
He was trying to surrender. Why kill him?

RYDER:
Would we treat them any different if they showed up on Earth, armed to the teeth?

LIAM:
Maybe not.

RYDER:
Peace isn't going to be an option here.

[Ryder and Liam walk away.]

RYDER:

We'll come back for his body once we find the others.

LIAM:

Hope Greer's still alive somewhere. Still, take a look at this architecture. This is really something.

[Ryder looks at the large alien structure in front of them. In front of it sits a smaller structure that can be scanned. A rotating blue luminescent orb is hovering above it.]

RYDER:

Never seen anything like it. Looks to be at least three or four centuries old.

LIAM:

The arks left 600 years ago, right?

RYDER:

Yeah. Our long-range scans wouldn't have shown this. These structures... that tower... maybe none of it was here when we left the Milky Way.

[Ryder and Liam keep walking. They find an atmospheric analyzer.]

RYDER:

It's gear from one of our shuttles.

[Ryder activates it.]

RYDER:

Good. The atmospheric sensor is still working.

LIAM:

Let me guess. It says "don't breathe the air."

RYDER:

Yeah, but no sign of industrial pollutants. That's not what killed this place. And no radioactive isotopes, either. So nobody nuked the place.

[Ryder and Liam find themselves near another alien structure. More of the same alien species that attacked them are there.]

LIAM:
Hear that?

[A fight ensues. Ryder and Liam kill the aliens.]

RYDER:
First species we meet and it's out for blood.

LIAM:
Not if we don't give it to them.

[Another rotating blue orb appears hovering above a small alien structure. Ryder scans it.]

RYDER:
Okay now *this* is weird. Even with these readings, I have no idea what it does.

LIAM:
Just imagine the mind that invented it.

RYDER:
If that's even possible. Evolution separated from ours by two million light years.

LIAM:
Spooky when you put it that way.

[Ryder and Liam use their jump jet to reach higher grounds.]

LIAM:
Hey look—flares going up! Over there!

RYDER:
Could be our people. I'll mark the navpoint.

[They hear a noise in front of them.]

LIAM:
There! Watch out!

[A beast runs toward Ryder to attack.]

LIAM:
What is this thing?

RYDER:
I think it wants to eat us!

[They kill it.]

LIAM:
Okay, it's dead.

RYDER:
Whatever "it" was.

[Ryder scans its corpse.]

LIAM:
How'd it cloak like that?

RYDER:
It's organic. No sign of technology.

LIAM:
Wow. So the cloaking is... biological?

RYDER:
Yeah. Weird.

[Ryder and Liam find another wreckage.]

LIAM:
Wreckage ahead.

RYDER:
It's the other half of our shuttle.

LIAM:
What a mess. I can't believe we survived this.

RYDER:
We're not off-planet yet.

[Ryder is opening a container when Liam warns him they're not alone.]

LIAM:

Shit, movement on our perimeter...It's an ambush!

RYDER:

Ah, hell—they got the jump on us!

[Ryder and Liam fight the aliens, who come at them from different sides.]

LIAM:

Careful, they've got one of those animals!

RYDER:

Watch for cloaking!

LIAM:

Us or them! They forced this!

RYDER:

Trying to surround us! Keep an eye on your six o'clock!

LIAM:

And our two o'clock... and our eight... Now who's dead, asshole?

[Ryder shoots the remaining alien.]

LIAM:

There! We got 'em all! You're pretty good at this, Ryder.

RYDER:

I fought off an occasional raider or two in my day. I used to guard a mass effect relay.

LIAM:

Wish we'd had one for the arks.

[They walk among the wreckage.]

LIAM:

Maybe we should see if there's anything useful here.

RYDER:
Fight recorder here.

[They listen to the audio log, which begins with static.]

FISHER (AUDIO LOG):
—experienced a catastrophic lightning hit! Liam and Ryder are gone!

ALEC RYDER (AUDIO LOG):
What's your location?

[Only static can be heard.]

ALEC RYDER (AUDIO LOG):
Damn. Hyperion, this is the Pathfinder! Mayday, mayday! Ship in distress!

HAYES (AUDIO LOG):
Sir, our engine's down! Prepare for an emergency landing!

[The audio log stops.]

LIAM:
Hey, maybe they made it?

RYDER:
There's hope.

[Ryder and Liam arrive at a hill with an alien facility on top of it.]

LIAM:
Some sort of structure up that hill.

RYDER:
This place is taking a beating from the storms.

LIAM:
Along with everything else on the planet.

[Ryder scans some parts of the metallic surfaces seen in front of the facility. One of those readings indicates an unknown alloy.]

RYDER:

Maybe a lightning rod of some kind. No idea how to get it working though.

[They avoid the worst of the lightening and find refuge inside the alien facility. It's entirely dark, with numerous rooms and open doors. Ryder uses the light from his helmet to find his way inside. Liam follows him.]

LIAM:

Well, let's hope no one's home.

RYDER:

Doesn't look like a home at all.

[They pass by an open door and reach the second room.]

LIAM:

Yeah. No one's living here.

RYDER:

So what's it for?

LIAM:

Doesn't look like the other structures we've seen. Different design.

[They keep walking, though it's hard to see inside.]

LIAM:

Must be a way to get some lights on.

[Ryder scans one of the machines.]

RYDER:

Huh. Who knows? Let's call it a "weird alien machine."

LIAM:

We sure could use SAM right about now.

[Ryder and Liam go into another room. They find another alien device.]

LIAM:
Huh? What's all this about?

[Ryder scans the device.]

RYDER:
You guessed it. Another weird alien machine.

LIAM:
Figures.

RYDER:
Only one way to find out...

LIAM:
You mean turn it on?

[Ryder doesn't answer Liam. He activates the machine.]

LIAM:
What are you doing, Ryder?

[Once activated, the machine begins making noise.]

RYDER:
Oh shit...

LIAM:
That can't be good!

[Finally, the noise subsides and lights illuminate the facility.]

LIAM:
Oh.

RYDER:
So the weird alien machine is a generator.

LIAM:
Yeah. Sure. Why wouldn't it be?

RYDER:
Maybe it did something.

[Another machine sits in a corner. Ryder activates it, and smoke comes out of it.]

RYDER:
Weird.

LIAM:
If that's poison, I know who to blame.

[An audio log is found on top of a metallic surface in the opposite corner.]

ALIEN (AUDIO LOG):
Zev gosad! Surnahd zot.

RYDER:
Same language as those aliens. Wonder what he's saying?

LIAM:
"Kill all humans," probably.

[Ryder activates another machine. An alarm sounds.]

RYDER:
Crap.

[He scans yet another machine.]

RYDER:
Another weird alien machine.

[They walk further down the facility.]

LIAM:
Hey, that door opened.

[The door leads to a closed room with another door at the end from where a blue light can be seen. Multiple alien machines lie near the door.]

RYDER:

Some kind of research lab?

LIAM:

Maybe. Then it got hit by a tornado.

[A digital-sounding noise can be heard.]

LIAM:

Weird. You hear that?

RYDER:

Looks like they were trying to tunnel in.

LIAM:

Don't think it turned out so well.

[A mechanic form near the door suddenly gets up. It's the source of the noise.]

LIAM:

Watch it!

RYDER:

What is it?

LIAM:

Pissed?

[They both kill it.]

LIAM:

There!

RYDER:

So now killer robots, too?

LIAM:

The geth back home would love this place.

[Ryder scans one of the machines near the door.]

RYDER:

Whatever this is, it scans as being old. Centuries old.

LIAM:

Wish we had SAM.

RYDER:

I think it's older than this lab and the equipment.

LIAM:

So maybe these aliens found it deeper in? Like an artifact?

[Ryder scans what is left of the mechanic form on the ground.]

RYDER:

Doesn't say much, other than it's not organic. And it's about the same age as that artifact.

LIAM:

You suppose it was guarding it?

RYDER:

Could be.

[Ryder scans the door.]

RYDER:

Some serious energy on the other side of that door.

LIAM:

Maybe it's closed for a reason.

RYDER:

These guys were poking around where they shouldn't have.

[Ryder and Liam get ready to leave the room. Ryder finds an audio log near the door.]

ALIEN (AUDIO LOG):

Keng zhef. Rol no todsurhanad. Jhan lurok.

RYDER:

Not exactly poetry, is it?

[They leave the room and walk back toward the facility's exit. Outside, the thunder can be heard again.]

RYDER:
Weather's still crappy.

[Aliens appear, guns in hand.]

LIAM:
Heads up! They were waiting for us!

RYDER:
Oh damn...

LIAM:
They got a lightning rod up and running!

[Everyone starts shooting. One of the cloaked beasts seen before tries to kill Ryder and Liam.]

LIAM:
Are these things stalking us?

RYDER:
Starting to feel like it!

[The fight continues between Liam, Ryder, and the aliens.]

LIAM:
This is *not* how I go out!

RYDER:
I don't think they're listening!

[They fight. The last remaining aliens are now dead.]

LIAM:
There. Last one's down.

RYDER:

Let's not wait around for more.

[They walk away.]

LIAM:

A path down on the right.

[As they walk toward the path, they hear a sound.]

LIAM:

You hear that?

RYDER:

Yeah. Radio static. But like a pattern.

[They keep walking.]

RYDER:

That static's getting louder.

GREER (VOICE-OVER):

What do you want?

ALIEN (VOICE-OVER):

Nyro rekhet!

GREER (VOICE-OVER):

I don't understand you! I'm from the Milky Way!

[The path leads to a closed space where aliens have cornered Greer. Liam and Ryder hide behind cover.]

LIAM:

It's Greer—they've got him!

GREER:

We come in peace! We need help! Our ship crashed, and—

ALIEN:

Niad!

GREER:

What does that *mean*?

ALIEN:

Hakad soh!

[Ryder starts shooting the aliens.]

ALIEN:

Tolerad!

GREER:

Help!

RYDER:

Hang on, Greer! We've got you!

LIAM:

Keep your head down!

RYDER:

Box them in, Liam!

LIAM:

Setting a kill zone! They're not getting out of this!

[Ryder and Liam kill the aliens.]

LIAM:

We're clear!

GREER:

Thank God. I was tapping my mic, hoping someone would notice.

RYDER:

You okay?

GREER:

Yeah. Where are the others?

RYDER:

They killed Kirkland. But Fisher's alive back at the crash site.

LIAM:

He's got a broken leg; needs help.

GREER:

I'll check around for supplies, then head back.

RYDER:

Stay put when you get there. We'll look for my dad's shuttle.

GREER:

Good luck. Can't wait to get off this rock.

[Ryder and Liam leave Greer and keep walking. They walk a few feet until Liam points at a nearby cave.]

LIAM:

Ryder, some sort of cave over there.

[They enter the cave, which is covered with leaves. A giant plant is at the center of it, looking intact and preserved.]

LIAM:

Check that out.

RYDER:

Now this looks more like the golden world my dad was expecting.

LIAM:

Then... the long-range scans were right? This could've been home?

RYDER:

Six-hundred years ago. And then... who knows.

[Ryder scans and detects a small trap on the ground right in front of the plant.]

RYDER:

Dead animal here, in some sort of trap. Pretty recent, too.

LIAM:

You suppose those aliens set it?

RYDER:

If they did, they don't play nice with anyone.

LIAM:

Or maybe they're starving.

[Ryder scans the plant.]

RYDER:

if it's anything like plants back in the Milky Way, there are signs of cellular mutation.

LIAM:

It's lasted this long. Guess that makes it the alpha tree, huh?

RYDER:

Yeah. But what happened to all its friends outside?

LIAM:

How's this even possible?

RYDER:

Extreme example of a microclimate, maybe? Shielded by the cave all these years?

LIAM:

While the rest of the planet died?

RYDER:

Something nasty happened out there. But this means there's hope. Life as we know it can thrive in Andromeda.

[They leave the cave and keep walking further north. There is another alien structure. The door opens as Ryder and Liam get close to it.]

RYDER:

Oh, great... That can't be good.

[More of the same species of alien come out and start shooting in Liam and Ryder's direction.]

RYDER:
Looks like a whole patrol!

LIAM:
Don't want them to drag us off like Greer!

RYDER:
Push them back!

LIAM:
Got 'em!

[As the alien patrol dies, Ryder gets close to the door. It's now closed.]

RYDER:
No way in here.

LIAM:
Just as well. We're not equipped for a big fight.

[They walk further away from the alien structure.]

CORA (COMM):
SOS on frequency 154.3. Anyone there?

RYDER:
Cora, we read you. You're alive!

CORA (COMM):
Shuttle repairs are underway, but we're surrounded!

RYDER:
They're not friendly—on our way!

SCENE IV

Finding the second shuttle

[Ryder and Liam use their jump jet to reach the top of a cliff. They find the second shuttle on the other side, with Cora and others surrounded. Gun fires can be heard.]

LIAM:

Cora, we've got your back!

CORA:

They're trying to pin us down!

HAYES:

Doing a good job of it, too!

[Ryder and Liam join them.]

LIAM:

Ryder, light 'em up!

RYDER:

I'm on it!

CORA:

Pick your targets!

RYDER:

Plenty of those!

CORA:

They're trying to pin us down!

HAYES:

Doing a good job of it, too!

DR. CARLYLE:

I got one!

HAYES:
What did we ever do to them?

LIAM:
Careful, they fight dirty!

CORA:
Harry, you guys okay?

DR. CARLYLE:
Not dead yet!

[The fight is over. The aliens are dead.]

LIAM:
Well, that settled *that*.

DR. CARLYLE:
Cavalry to the rescue. Nice to see you guys.

RYDER:
You too, Harry. How is everyone?

CORA:
Still in one piece. You got here just in time.

RYDER:
Where's my dad?

CORA:
He went scouting ahead while we fixed the shuttle. Ryder, there's weapons and ammo at the shuttle. Stock up.

[Ryder enters the shuttle, gets the weapons and ammo he needs.]

RYDER:
Did these things try talking to you at all?

CORA:
Barely a word, then started shooting. What about you?

RYDER:

We tried being nice. They didn't play along.

[An alien ship appears in the sky.]

HAYES:

Oh hell... enemy ship on the way!

CORA:

Get to cover! Go go! Here they come!

[The ship doesn't land. It says mid-air. Aliens are dropped from the ship. As soon as they hit the ground, they advance toward the Pathfinder team, guns in hands. A fight breaks out.]

LIAM:

They got balls to try an airdrop!

CORA:

Don't let up!

DR. CARLYLE:

Ah! Lightning zapped their shuttle!

[The fight ends. Liam walks toward the corpse of an alien and shoots it multiple times.]

CORA:

Liam! Enough!

LIAM:

Right. It's just... these arseholes killed Kirkland.

RYDER - dialogues options:

-Anger is good.

-Calm down.

RYDER:

I hear you. But this isn't the time to lose our cool.

[Liam shoots the same alien again with three additional short bursts.]

LIAM:
Now I feel better.

CORA:
What about the others?

RYDER:
Fisher's wounded but sitting tight. Greer's with him... though our shuttle's in pieces.

[Dr. Carlyle arrives, holding Hayes, who is putting pressure on her wounds.]

HAYES:
Guys...

DR. CARLYLE:
She's been hit!

[Hayes and Dr. Carlyle sit. Lightning begins to strike, and the rocks around them begin moving and floating in the air.]

RYDER:
Take cover! Take cover!

CORA:
Hang on!

[Cora rushes to place herself in front of Hayes and Dr. Carlyle. Her hand outstretched, she uses her biotics to create a biotic shield that protects the three of them. She lets it fall once the danger passes.]

LIAM:
I didn't know you were biotic.

CORA:
Don't worry. It's not contagious.

HAYES:
Before they attacked, I... (Coughs) I managed to fix our comms.

CORA:
You're a lifesaver. Now just take it easy.

[Ryder uses his omni-tool to find a signal.]

RYDER:

SAM, are you there?

SAM:

QEC link established. Affirmative, Scott. The Pathfinder needs to speak with you.

[Alec Ryder can be seen on Ryder's omni-tool.]

ALEC RYDER (COMM):

Good to see you in one piece. What's our status?

RYDER:

Liam and I are with Cora.

[Cora uses her omni-tool to talk to Alec.]

CORA:

We have wounded crew. The good news is our shuttle's been repaired. We can get back to the ark.

ALEC RYDER (COMM):

Not with these storms. It's too risky to fly.

RYDER - dialogues options:

EMOTIONAL -Damn the risk.

LOGICAL -Our wounded need help.

RYDER:

Our wounded can't wait much longer. Do you have something in mind?

ALEC RYDER (COMM):

If the storm is the problem, then let's solve the problem.

RYDER:

We're talking about weather.

ALEC RYDER (COMM):

And I have an idea about that. Rendezvous at my coordinates, we'll- Damn it. They've spotted me.

[Alec can no longer be seen on Scott and Cora's omni-tool.]

CORA:

Sir! Sir!

[Cora turns to Hayes and Dr. Carlyle, who is tending her wounds.]

CORA:

Can you two manage alone?

DR. CARLYLE:

I can keep her stable. For a while.

CORA:

Let's move! SAM, do you have the Pathfinder's position?

SAM:

Marking the navpoint on your map.

CORA:

Doesn't look far. Let's make this quick. We have to get there before this storm hits. No detours.

RYDER:

What was my dad scouting for?

CORA:

He was trying to get readings on that tower.

LIAM:

Well, the navpoint puts him near it.

SAM:

Exercise caution. The storm front is already gaining intensity.

RYDER:

Nice to have you back, SAM. How about some good news next time?

CORA:

Ryder, your dad was in trouble. We have to find him.

LIAM:

We gotta find the Pathfinder. Like, right now.

[The team retraces Ryder's previous steps, returning to the alien structure with the closed door. No aliens come out this time.]

RYDER:

SAM's right. We don't have much time.

CORA:

Look, the rods—they're drawing the lightning away.

LIAM:

If we hug that wall, that might keep us safe.

CORA:

Dead bodies here. Lightning didn't do this.

LIAM:

Neither did we. This is more than we took out.

RYDER:

Incendiary rounds. My dad's been busy.

CORA:

He was an N7. They don't mess around.

[The team keeps walking, following the path to the navpoint.]

CORA:

Somebody was pretty clever with these rods.

RYDER:

Only way to survive here.

[There is a cliff on their left.]

RYDER:

We're close. The navpoint shows my dad's up there.

ACT II

SCENE I

Infiltrating the alien base

[The Pathfinder team joins Alec atop the ledge overlooking an alien facility.]

CORA:

Sir...

ALEC RYDER:

Stay low.

[They continue their approach, crouching down to look at the patrolling aliens. There is a long and large blue barrier covering the facility and preventing entry.]

CORA:

Who *are* these guys?

ALEC RYDER:

Visitors. Just like us. I don't think they're native to the planet.

RYDER:

They're not. We found an abandoned lab. Like they've been studying the place.

ALEC RYDER:

Good work. You actually did some scouting.

RYDER - dialogues options:

EMOTIONAL -We're explorers.

LOGICAL -It's what I trained for.

CASUAL -That surprises you?

PROFESSIONAL -Thank you.

RYDER:

You didn't think I would?

ALEC RYDER:

You never know what people are made of, not until everything goes wrong.

RYDER:

Plenty of that on this mission.

CORA:

Sir, you said you had an idea about the weather?

ALEC RYDER:

It's the dark energy cloud the Hyperion hit. It's affecting the whole planet, interfering with that...

[Alec Ryder points at the facility's tower. The blue cloud Ryder and Liam observed when they arrived in Habitat 7 is coming out of the tower and expanding in the sky above.]

SAM:

The tower is caught in a feedback loop with the cloud. Together, they're disrupting the entire climate with undirected energy.

RYDER:

It would explain a cave we found. Plant life sheltered from the storm... from that tower.

ALEC RYDER:

It's a good bet. And I think if we can get in there and shut the tower down...

LIAM:

The lighting goes away.

ALEC RYDER:

And the shuttle can get us out of here. In theory. We just have to get past them...

RYDER - dialogues options:

EMOTIONAL -Then let's do it.

LOGICAL -And if we're wrong?

RYDER:

We're banking on science we don't really understand. What if the theory's wrong?

SAM:

The alternative is an 85% chance of death from lightning strike, capture, or worse.

RYDER:

Well, when you put it that way...

ALEC RYDER:

No illusions about this. It'll be a nasty fight the whole way.

CORA:

Beats getting fried by lightning. But we risk turning a skirmish with these guys into something worse.

ALEC RYDER:

It's them or us.

LIAM:

Oh, it's them. Problem is we're outnumbered.

ALEC RYDER:

I've been working on that. We just need to change the math.

[Alec activates grenades that destroy some of the lightning rods around the facility, which causes lightning to strike the shield. The shield drops, no longer creating a barrier preventing entry. Alec jump-jets down to ground level to begin the fight through the facility.]

LIAM:

Works for me!

[They all jump. On the ground, aliens start shooting at them. Alec is a bit further ahead, reaching the facility.]

CORA:

Let's go!

LIAM:

Right behind you!

ALEC RYDER:

Push ahead to the structure! SAM, load combat profile.

[The team fight their way through and reach the second floor of the facility.]

ALEC RYDER:

SAM, biotic amp interface mode.

LIAM:

Have to keep an eye on our flank!

ALEC RYDER:

Not if we keep moving forward! Don't let them catch us!

[Alec crosses the facility's bridge and kills a nearby alien.]

ALEC RYDER:

Keep up!

LIAM:

How's your dad doing all this? He's like a machine!

RYDER:

No idea, but it's working!

ALEC RYDER:

That's it—we're doing it! Not much farther!

RYDER:

Where are we going?

ALEC RYDER:

All the way to the top!

RYDER:

And then what?

[Ryder joins Alec. There is a gap in the bridge wide enough that he has to use his jump jet to reach the other side.]

ALEC RYDER:

Ready? Let's get inside there.

[Alec opens the door. They immediately start shooting the alien enemies. Behind them, Cora gives a painful groan.]

CORA:
That hurt!

LIAM:
Almost fried me!

CORA:
Don't stop! If we fall behind, we're dead!

LIAM:
Shit, they're crack shots!

ALEC RYDER:
Come on! Into the building!

[They fight inside the building and shoot multiple aliens.]

ALEC RYDER:
SAM, give me Engineer profile. Squad, on me! We're almost there!

CORA:
Sir! Where are you getting these profiles?

ALEC RYDER:
Little help from SAM!

RYDER:
What does that mean?

ALEC RYDER:
Just focus on the fight!

[They find their way outside where the fight continues.]

CORA:
The storm's getting worse!

ALEC RYDER:

We'll lose our chance if we don't beat it! Come on!

[They reach an open platform.]

ALEC RYDER:

This looks like the control center! Keep them off my back!

CORA:

You heard him!

LIAM:

We made it! In one piece!

ALEC RYDER:

Not over yet. I need to get through that door over there!

[The door is at the center of the platform. It's closed. There is an alien device a few feet away. Alec stands by it.]

RYDER:

What now?

ALEC RYDER:

I need to decipher the language.

CORA:

There's more coming up!

LIAM:

What's the plan here? They'll surround us in no time!

RYDER:

We need to defend both sides, or they'll flank us!

LIAM:

Where do you want us?

[Liam stands to the right of the door, Cora on the left. Ryder stands in the center.]

LIAM:

Watch it! Think I see movement!

CORA:

We held them off at the shuttle, we can do it again!

RYDER:

Lot of people still counting on us!

LIAM:

I'm just getting warmed up!

[The aliens come from right and left. Ryder, Cora, and Liam defend Alec, who is in the center attempting to decipher the code with SAM.]

CORA:

They mean business! Keep them off your dad!

SAM:

Analyzing possible inputs. Twenty-five percent decrypted.

ALEC RYDER:

Hurry. We don't have long.

RYDER:

Hold both sides! Can't let them slip through!

LIAM:

What is this place, anyway?

RYDER:

I don't know, but they sure want it back!

ALEC RYDER:

Well?

SAM:

Fifty-percent decrypted. It's an unusually complicated syntax.

ALEC RYDER:

I can see that. Try a recursive search.

SAM:

I will need a moment to evaluate the pattern.

ALEC RYDER:

We only have a moment. Do it.

LIAM:

I think I really pissed that one off! Maybe because I shot him in the face!

CORA:

Sir, any progress?

SAM:

Decryption is 75% complete.

ALEC RYDER:

We've almost got it!

CORA:

Just a little longer! They're falling back!

LIAM:

Could be regrouping for another push. Stay sharp.

SAM:

Decryption complete.

ALEC RYDER:

That did it! It's a security override—I'll try to open the door from here! Ah, damn—it's jammed! I need to take a look at it!

[Alec walks toward the door.]

SAM:

Decryption complete.

ALEC RYDER:

Scott, I need your help over here!

CORA:

Go—it's okay! We'll keep a lookout!

ALEC RYDER:
We need to get this door open!

RYDER:
On it!

[Ryder joins Alec at the door.]

ALEC RYDER:
Put your back into it!

[Ryder and Alec attempt to open the door.]

RYDER:
Do you really think we can shut this thing down?

[It works. The door opens.]

ALEC RYDER:
I don't know yet. SAM's decoded part of the language. Now we'll see if I can have a conversation.

RYDER - dialogues options:
EMOTIONAL -Be careful.
LOGICAL -With who?

RYDER:
Who do you plan on talking to?

ALEC RYDER:
More like "what." I think it's automated.

[Alec walks inside the structure. He turns around to look at Ryder.]

ALEC RYDER:
Come on. These are the moments that make it all worthwhile.

[In front of them is an alien device in the shape of a triangle, each of its sides emitting a ray of light.]

ALEC RYDER:
SAM, begin translating.

SAM:
A moment.

[A few seconds pass while the triangle continues emitting a ray of light in front of Alec. Ryder watches, right behind him.]

SAM:
Indexing.

[A second passes.]

SAM:
Translation complete.

ALEC RYDER:
Let's see what we have.

[Alec raises his hand. He interfaces with the alien device, which seems to be like an atmospheric processor. Orange lights can be seen around his hand. The connection works. Outside, the atmosphere near the tower is changing. Ryder goes back outside. Thunder can no longer be heard, and the sun is shining.]

RYDER:
I'll be damned... It's working!

[Alec joins Ryder outside.]

RYDER:
You did it!

ALEC RYDER:
There's hope, at least.

*RYDER - dialogues options:
EMOTIONAL -That's what people need.
LOGICAL -And proof we can succeed.*

RYDER:

This is more than hope—it's proof we weren't crazy. We can fly to a whole new galaxy and still make sense of things.

ALEC RYDER:

SAM had a little something to do with it.

SAM:

It was simply a matter of linguistics. Though I am pleased to have-

[A purge inside the structure begins and Alec and Ryder barely have time to turn to look at it before a rush of smoke blows them away. Ryder screams trying to hold on to the platform, but he can't maintain a grip and is thrown off. Upon landing, Ryder's helmet cracks. He is unable to breath and gasps for air. He sees only smoke in front of him until an orange light appears. It's coming from Alec's omni-tool. Alec limps towards him.]

ALEC RYDER:

Repeat, we need an emergency extraction now!

CORA (COMM):

They're spinning up the shuttle. ETA is three, maybe four minutes!

[Alec arrives at Ryder's side and sees how hard it is for him to breathe.]

ALEC RYDER:

We don't have that long.

[Alec replaces Ryder's helmet with his own.]

ALEC RYDER:

Deep breaths!

RYDER:

(Coughs) What are you- (Coughs)

[Alec uses his omni-tool.]

SAM:

Initiating transfer.

[Alec talks but Ryder can't hear him. Ryder's vision becomes blurry until he can no longer see Alec. Ryder blacks out.]

SCENE II

Pathfinder Transfer

[Inside Ryder's body, a section of pink nerves shrivel and turn dark, spreading quickly throughout his nervous system until the entire network appears withered. The vision of Cora and Liam hovering above Ryder is blurry. The tower with the blue cloud hovering above is behind them. Cora is using her omni-tool and shooting.]

CORA:

Move! He's going into cardiac arrest!

[Ryder's vision is still blurry, but he can see and hear a shuttle flying toward them. Back inside Ryder's body, a bright blue current runs through the shriveled nerves from multiple directions, gathering into a central cluster where the electrical light pulses. His eyes open. He's being rushed somewhere. Dr Carlyle, Liam, and Cora are with him.]

DR. CARLYLE:

Pulse is weakening! Tell the ark to prep med-bay! C'mon.

[Bursts of blue energy are seen sinking and flowing through the nerve axons, restoring their pink and more robust appearance. Reaching a central cluster, the energy pulses violently. As this continues, Ryder has multiple flashbacks, too fast to distinguish every moment. Ryder is now in Hyperion's med-bay, with Lexi working with Dr. Carlyle.]

DR. CARLYLE:

Pulse dropping! We're losing them!

[More flashbacks. A woman is seen smiling and taking two children in her arms.]

LEXI:

It's a seizure! His brain can't handle the connection!

[Dark veins appear on the corner of Ryder's vision.]

LEXI:

Get him to SAM Node!

[Liam, Dr. Carlyle, and Lexi are carrying Ryder to SAM Node.]

LEXI:

SAM, what's the reading?

SAM:

Ryder's implant is overloading. I suggest a hardwire connection.

[Ryder moves a hand. Lexi takes his hand and puts it back on his stomach. She looks at Dr. Carlyle.]

LEXI:

Do it!

Dr. Carlyle:

There!

[Ryder's vision turns black.]

SCENE III

Post Mission

[Ryder's eyes slowly open.]

SAM (PRIVATE):

Welcome back, Scott.

[Ryder is in a SAM Node, lying down. He sits up.]

RYDER:

What happened?

SAM:

You were clinically dead for twenty-two seconds.

RYDER - dialogues options:

EMOTIONAL -What about the others?

LOGICAL -How did I survive?

RYDER:

Did the rest of the team make it?

[We see Liam sitting on the ground in front of table where Ryder was lying down. The room is quite dark. A panel behind Liam is displaying data.]

LIAM:

Hey... You're still with us.

[Liam gets up and uses his omni-tool to contact the team.]

LIAM:

Guys, get to SAM node! Ryder's awake!

[Ryder sits up a bit straighter.]

LIAM:

Who were you talking to?

RYDER:

SAM.

LIAM:

I didn't hear him.

[Cora and Lexi enter the SAM Node.]

CORA:

You're up.

[Lexi uses her omni-tool to start a quick visual exam, moving her hand from left to right for Ryder to follow.]

LEXI:

Look here. And here.

[Ryder follows the gesture with his eyes. He then spots his father's helmet.]

RYDER:

My father... where...?

[Both Cora and Lexi look at the ground, looking sad. Ryder understands his father is dead.]

CORA:

It was your life or his. And he chose you. I'm sorry, Scott. I know this must be a blow.

RYDER - dialogues options:

-He died a hero.

-I didn't know him.

RYDER:

He made the ultimate sacrifice. He got the team out of danger. We all owe him for that.

CORA:

He once said that when his time came, he wanted to go out among stars no one had seen before.

[Liam puts a hand on Cora's shoulder to bring her comfort. Ryder looks around, surprised.]

RYDER:

What are we doing in SAM node?

LEXI;

SAM is now part of you... in a way we don't entirely understand. It played havoc with your brain.

RYDER:

SAM?

SAM:

Your father authorised the transfer of Pathfinder authority to you.

RYDER:

Shouldn't that be Cora?

CORA:

In theory. In reality... You're the new Pathfinder, Scott.

RYDER - dialogues options:

-If there's no other choice...

-Are you kidding me?

RYDER:

Whoa. Well... if that's how it has to be...

LIAM:

Don't sell yourself short. I think you can do it.

RYDER:

Cora?

CORA:

It's what he wanted. I won't stand in the way. But being Pathfinder is a serious job. You sure you're ready for this?

RYDER - dialogues options:

EMOTIONAL -It's in my blood.

LOGICAL -I can learn.

CASUAL -Dad already decided.

PROFESSIONAL -I'll have to be.

RYDER:

I'm sure there's a lot I don't know, but I'll figure it out.

LIAM:

If it helps, you've got me to lean on.

LEXI:

It's all academic, anyway—SAM's linked to your mind on a deeper level now. Trying to untangle it could kill you.

CORA:

I know this is tough, but... we need to start thinking about the next step. A lot of people are counting on us.

RYDER:

Is the ark still drifting?

LIAM:

That's the thing—whatever your dad did with that tower, it saved the day. Some sort of atmosphere scrubber.

CORA:

The energy cloud thinned out. We're on our way to the rally point now. Should be at the Nexus soon.

LEXI:

He needs to rest first.

CORA:

He's got two hours. We'll need our Pathfinder for this.

[Cora and Lexi leave. Liam is about to leave as well, but he turns around.]

LIAM:

Oh, I checked on your sister—still no change. But if you can pull through, so can she. A bit of your dad in both of you.

[Liam leaves. Ryder is now alone in the SAM Node.]

SAM (PRIVATE):

Your father will be missed.

RYDER:

What's going on, SAM?

SAM (PRIVATE):

This is our private channel. I shared it with him.

RYDER - dialogues options:

EMOTIONAL -Why'd he pick me?

LOGICAL -What channel?

RYDER:

Why did he do it? Why me?

SAM (PRIVATE):

Unknown. But he never acted without reason. Alec wouldn't want us to lose sight of the goal. He said pain emboldens our resolve. He'd insist we grow stronger from his passing.

[Ryder doesn't reply and stares at the ground.]

SCENE VI

Aliens on Habitat 7

[Back on Habitat 7, a ship lands on the same platform the Pathfinder team fought against the alien assault while protecting Alec Ryder. An alien, who appears to be the leader, walks out of the ship and enters the vault. Several aliens watch him. Once he's before the light-emitting triangle, an alien nearby hands him an alien device. It floats mid-air and leads the alien leader towards the triangle emitting light. After a few seconds of staring, the device shows Alec Ryder standing where he was before and using his connection with SAM to activate the vault. The alien leader imitates the way Alec raises his hand, then looks at his own hand as nothing happens. He takes one last look at Alec's projection before the device shuts off and follows him towards the vault's exit. Other aliens step back to let them pass.]